

1 Peter 5 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

As Peter now moves to wrap up the letter, he places several important instructions before his readers.

All of these were aimed at helping them secure the right kind of mindset in light of the persecution and pressure they were facing.

CHAPTER 5

- 1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:**
- 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;**
- 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;**
- 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

Peter speaks first to the elders and tells them to be diligent to shepherd the flock of God – meaning the Church.

The word *elder* and the word *pastor* are virtually synonymous in the NT.

Elder refers to the *character* of the man while *pastor* speaks to his function.

Elders are also called *bishops* or *overseers*, which also speaks of their role and function.

As you track through scripture, you find that all pastors are elders and all elders are pastors, in terms of their *role* in the Body of Christ.

But a careful study of scripture, Jewish social life, and the history of the Church reveals that it was standard practice for there to be one pastor who was the designated chief shepherd or *leader* of the local church.

Today, we see this in the office of the *senior pastor*.
The governing of the nation of Israel in the Exodus is a classic case in point of how God wants His people governed and led.

God raised up *one man*, Moses, and anointed and authorized him to lead.

To assist him God called his brother Aaron – this is analogous to the ministry of the *associate* or *assistant* pastor.

When the administration of the nation became too much for Moses, God raised up a body of 70 judges who helped Moses administer justice and equality of ministry throughout the nation.

These judges are like the pastoral and administrative staff of a growing church working along with the elders who seek to ensure the needs of the entire body are being taken care of.

Later in the history of the nation of Israel, when the synagogue became the focal point of Jewish life, they patterned the leadership of the synagogue after a similar manner.

Each synagogue was ruled by a single elder called the *arche-synagogous*, who was assisted by several attendants we would call “elders.”

It appears that when the early church first began and the Body met in small local groups, they followed this same pattern.

Each local congregation was overseen and served by a small group of leaders who were in turn led by one man they recognized as the chief elder, the man called to lead the flock; and their role was to assist him.

When Peter writes –

1 The elders who are among you

He means all of those who hold the office of being an elder and overseer in the local church.

Notice the way he phrases it – “The elders WHO ARE AMONG YOU.”

He pictures the flock of God, not as *many flocks*, dispersed here and there in local congregations – but as one massive flock – He is speaking of the Whole Church as one community.

The elders are scattered throughout this flock wherever it meets.

It's the elders who are among the flock, not the flock among the elders.

Peter knows that God will ensure that wherever His people meet, there will be men who are gifted and called to lead and provide what is needed that His flock might be well served.

¹The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder

Notice that Peter sees himself, not as being above others, but as a peer alongside other elders.

and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

Peter is *different* from most of those who read this letter in that he was one of the original disciples and witnessed the Passion of Christ when he was arrested, tried, and then executed.

And whereas he *is* unique in this regard from most of those who would read this letter, he is right with them in that *together* they will *all* partake of the wondrous glory that shall be theirs when Christ comes again.

²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

Now Peter switches the picture.

After seeing one flock and the elders as scattered among it, now he see the elders and how the body has been gathered round their leadership and calling as ministers of God's grace.

So He says to the elders – they are to *shepherd* the flock of God they've been called to.

A Shepherd's task is three-fold;

- 1) Lead
- 2) Feed
- 3) Protect the flock.

- 1) The Shepherd must first of all determine where God wants His people to go and then faithfully follow the direction He lays out. This means that the pastor needs to have a *vision*, a Spirit-inspired

picture of the future that is worthy of pursuing.

Shepherds aren't called to lead people into pursuits that are aimed at glorifying or exalting *the shepherd*.

The pastor isn't to use people to promote himself or his own dreams.

He is to lead them to pasturage God directs, for God's glory, not his.

Shepherds are also called to LEAD, not *drive*, the sheep.

This means the pastor must himself go first.

He can never ask those in his charge to go somewhere he hasn't already gone.

It's a principle of the Kingdom of God that leaders lead by EXAMPLE, not by coercion, threat or intimidation.

2) The Shepherd must also *feed* the flock.

And the best diet for Christians is the Word of God.

3) The Shepherd must then *protect* the flock.

He stays on the alert to all that which would seek to harm the people of God, whether we're talking about the gopher holes of worldly lusts or the snares of heresy.

When the pastor sees a potential threat, he is bold to mark it and warn the flock away from it.

In our day, this role of the pastor is often labeled as being judgmental and mean-spirited.

I know several good, godly pastors who've been roundly criticized because they sought only to protect the flock.

There is a lot of junk that is being taught in the church today and several well known Christian celebrities who are teaching things that are rank heresy.

When a pastor, in genuine concern over the welfare of the Body raises a word of caution about these people, there is usually someone who takes great offense and questions their motive.

In our pluralistic society, it seems the only person who cannot air his/her opinion is the evangelical Christian.

We are labeled as *intolerant* if we dare to say that a person is wrong.

But the Christian is only being consistent with our professed belief in Christ!

Because to say we believe in Christ means that truth is absolute

and that there are consequences, eternal consequences for what a person believes.

If evangelical Christians say they believe in Christ as THE Way, Truth and Life, then we have only two options:

- 1) Proclaim Christ as the only way and every other way a dead end, and so face the charge by the world of being intolerant.
- 2) Keep silent and let people go on believing whatever they want, and so face the charge from the Lord of being unfaithful hypocrites.

Personally, I think we can *reason* with the world to see that we are only being *consistent* when we declaim error and proclaim Christ. If we are gentle and respectful of those who oppose and disagree with us, then we will eventually win their ear, and hopefully their hearts and minds.

We ought to expect opposition from the world, but what's sad is when people IN THE CHURCH castigate pastors for warning their flock of heresy.

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers,

At first reading that seems almost an oxymoron: SERVING & OVERSEEING.

The overseer is one who is OVER and his/her task is to tell others what to do.

But *servicing* means putting others first and appears as the position of being *beneath* or *under* others.

It's the way of the world to see authority and oversight as something that is directive and privileged.

The overseer is almost always understood as being the *top* position, the one everyone works *for*.

In fact, the overseer usually sees him/herself as "too good" to serve- that's for those *below* him/her.

But Peter turns this idea on its head for the people of God.

By the time he wrote this, Peter had come to a full appreciation for what Jesus had taught about who was greatest in the kingdom.

Those who are called to lead, are called to lead by *servicing*!

Leadership is service!

The elder oversees by serving those committed to his care.

There is no *task* that's beneath him because there is no *person* who is beneath him.

He is the last and all others are first; he is the servant of all. You can tell a lot about the character of a church by spending some time with the leadership and listening to them talk about the people of the congregation.

Take a look at the offices of the staff and where they're located. Have the world's marks of status and success infiltrated the lifestyles of the elders and staff?

Do the elders and staff sequester themselves and place a heavy barrier between themselves and the flock?

Do they leave the "menial" tasks of the fellowship to others?

Are cooking and cleaning deemed beneath them?

Do they park in the spot closest to the door and make others walk?

Not too many years ago, CCCM remodeled the restrooms just off the foyer of the sanctuary.

Those bathrooms get a lot of use almost every day of the week and literally thousands pass through the doors of CC.

Guess who installed the urinals and toilet bowls? Pastor Chuck.

Over the years, CC has seen many men come through the doors who say God has called them to pastor a church so they will show up at the office and ask to speak to a pastor.

What they expect is that they are going to be given a name and address and they will go out and take over the pastorate at some church somewhere – or they want to be put on staff at CCCM.

Pastor Romaine, who passed away just a couple weeks ago, used to deal with these guys this way – he would say, "Great! Follow me," and then lead them out to the back of the property where there was a shed – the janitorial shed.

He would then hand them a broom and say, sweep the parking lot.

Over the years, hundreds of men stopped by to say they were called to pastor, but only a very small number every pushed that broom.

When someone tells me that they think God is calling them to be a pastor, I immediately look to see what they're doing in serving the flock.

Being a pastor, being an elder means to *serve* – and if you aren't

serving, you're no elder.

Peter says about this service as an overseer that it is to be -

not by compulsion but willingly,

This is so crucial! The pastor's *heart* has to be in his ministry or it will turn into a drudgery and pain that will lead to resentment, first toward the people, and ultimately toward God.

Jesus said that His yoke is *easy* and His burden is *light*.

Whenever we're feeling burdened and weighed down, it means we're shouldering things the Lord has not laid on us.

It may be our own standards of *perfectionism* or our own *expectations*.

It may be the expectations of others – but it isn't the Lord, for His burden is light.

This is one of the biggest dangers that pastors and elders face – the temptation to minister to the expectations and demands of *people* rather than simply being faithful to the Lord's direction.

And it's one of the primary reasons I think the best form of church government is the *Senior Pastor* led church as opposed to the *Presbyterian* or *Congregational* models.

In the *Presbyterian* form of church government, it's the elders or deacons who run the church and they *hire* the pastor.

The problem with this is that the pastor often then seeks to *keep* his job by bending to the will of the elder board.

They hired him, and they can fire him.

Keeping his job is a matter of pleasing them instead of the Lord.

Rare is the man who can balance that kind of pressure and only follow the Lord's leading for the church.

The *Congregational* form of church government presents the same problem, though now the pastor has even *more* people to try to please.

In the *Senior Pastor led church*, the pastor is usually freer from trying to please man to stay focused on the vision and mission the Lord has given him.

not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

It's clear from this that Peter is thinking specifically about those

elders who are serving full-time in their capacity as *pastors*. Because they are not engaged in some other career or employment, they draw their sustenance and support from the giving of the people.

But Peter warns them they must never serve FOR THE INCOME it brings.

The pastorate is not a *career* – it’s a *vocation*, a *calling*.

Unless the Lord has called and anointed him with the gifts needed to shepherd the flock, then he cannot, ought not serve.

Sad to say, there are some men who enter seminary and seek to pastor churches who aren’t called or gifted.

Some of these men seek out the pastorate because in certain denominations, it’s a pretty cushy job.

Peter says all such motivation in ministry is nothing less than mercenary and makes the salary they receive a form of robbery – it’s dishonest gain, because it ought to be going to a man truly called and anointed.

Rather than serving FOR THE BUCKS – Peter says that pastors ought to serve *eagerly* – out of simple faithfulness to fulfill their calling by God.

3nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

Peter is here remembering something Jesus had said to the disciples and which fits so perfectly in with what we’ve been studying in our Sunday series on servanthood.

In Mark 10 we read -

42But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Peter reminds his readers that authority in the Kingdom is not like

authority in the world.

Pastors and elders are not *lords* who sit in some position *above* the flock.

They don't "lord it over" the people, ordering them here and there and telling them to do this and that.

They aren't *rulers*, they're *servants*!

And leadership in the Body of Christ is always and only about example!

Jesus was the perfect example.

Though He was God incarnate, when He came He did not take some earthly throne and demand that the human race come and prostrate itself before Him.

He came in humility as a servant and went all the way, as far as a person can go in service, to offer Himself up in death.

We get so hung up on recognition!

We know we're called to serve others and we will, for a season.

But when no one notices or appreciates our service and when we fail to get any kudos or thanks, then we become resentful and feel people are taking advantage of us.

So we draw a line and say, "No more."

We *condition* our service on the acknowledgement of others.

We limit it to the degree we are honored and respected for serving.

The idea of serving quietly to the point of death is totally foreign to us – and yet this is what Jesus did and calls you and I to emulate.

If anyone is to example this – it's those in the Body of Christ who are supposed to be the most mature – the elders.

But there's something here we need to take careful note of.

It's Peter's understanding of the position and authority granted by God *to* elders!

If the office of shepherd was so powerless that a shepherd didn't rule and lead, then there was little potential for him *being a lord*.

Because Peter gives this warning, it reveals that in his mind, there was the potential for abuse for the very reason that God *has given* tremendous authority to elders.

And that God-given authority then means the people are to adopt a

posture of submission to those the Lord has placed in the role of shepherding the flock.

We'll take a closer look at this when we get to v. 5.

4and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Peter reminds pastors and elders that in the end, they are only under-shepherds and the flock they are serving belongs to another – so they will give account for how they have led God's flock.

If they have led well, meaning they've seen themselves as servants who serve willingly and eagerly as good examples, then they will receive a special reward – a crown of unfading glory.

5Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

Here Peter quotes Proverbs 3:34 -

“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”●

6Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, **7**casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

As Peter has written to the elders about how to lead the flock – now he speaks to the flock about how to *respond* to that leadership. When he says, “You younger people” he means those who *aren't* elders; for you're either younger or elder.

If it's the elders' duty to lead, then it's the duty of the people to follow and this means being in a posture toward leadership that's submissive.

This speaks powerfully to our times and to the Church in the West, especially here in the United States.

We have so many churches, that it's easy for people to move from fellowship to fellowship and never really settle down to a serious commitment to one local church.

Many people look at church in the same way they look at shopping.

They have a *consumer-mentality* when it comes to Faith – where

can they get the most bang for their buck – if you will?
They don't look at Church as a place to get plugged in and commit to so much as a place to scratch their religious itch.
They judge their church experience on how *rewarding* it is, and consider the reward in terms of entertainment and excitement.
The thought of being *committed* to a church and to a group of people is anathema to them.
Having a regular ministry where others *depend* on them is unthinkable.

Let's be frank – there are good churches and there are those that aren't so good.

That judgment needs to be made, not on how exciting or entertaining they are but on whether or not they are being faithful to the vision and mission God has given them.
Some people remain committed to a bad church long after they ought to have left because their commitment is not so much to the Lord as to tradition and what they're comfortable with.
Other people refuse to make *any kind of commitment* whatsoever, even to a really good church, because they don't understand what God wants the Church to be in their lives.

Peter's word here is a *corrective* to these attitudes.

He calls the people of the church to be submissive to those the Lord has placed in the role of leading the flock.
This means first of all that the people will be looking to their elders to lead and serve as Peter has characterized godly leadership.
They will recognize God's call in the humility, willingness, and eagerness of the elders and pastors.
Where these are lacking – they need to seriously question their continued participation in that ministry.

But when they see these qualities in the elders and pastors, they need to settle down and get plugged in – trusting the leadership and direction they provide.

Peter then expands on the idea of submission and extends it as the basic posture all of us are to have toward one another.

Submission means to rank or arrange under.

Again, as we saw last Sunday, this doesn't mean we're to focus on

ourselves being *last* or *under* so much as it means we are to treat others as *above* us.

Submission isn't me-centered; it's simply a concern to put *you* first.

Then Peter says we are to be *clothed with humility*.

The word he uses here for "clothed" was an unusual word that referred to the act of a slave when putting on an apron to perform some menial task.

It's the word used in John 13:4 when Jesus rose from the table to tie a towel around His waist as He bent to wash the disciples' feet.

The only other time this word is used in classical Greek is to describe the act of placing the royal robes of office on a king's shoulders.

What a fitting picture – for a good king sees his role as the *servant* of the people and his office as one of *example*.

That royal robe is a thing of *duty and responsibility* more than *privilege and power*.

I'm sure Peter has both images in mind as he selects this word – for he has come to understand that in the Kingdom of God – it's humility that defines greatness.

The servant's apron becomes an honored, royal garment.

In quoting Proverbs 3:34, Peter reminds his readers that pride and arrogance lead to nothing less than opposition from God – while the humble, those who are honest and open, get more grace from the Lord.

Grace and pride are *eternal enemies*.

Pride is preoccupied with the self and demands that God bless me in light of what I think I *deserve*.

But grace will only deal with me on the basis *What and Who God* is, not on the basis of anything in me. [\[1\]](#)

What would heaven be like if our salvation and standing before God were based on our merits?

It would be little different from earth, or even from hell, because it would be a place populated by beings who were pre-occupied with themselves.

It would be an eternal *brag-fest* – with each person parading

him/herself before others, showing off their rewards because of what they'd done.

Those who barely made it would be eternally envious of those who'd acquired more crowns and rewards.

We can be thankful that salvation and our standing before God is all of grace because it guarantees we are all equal before God and all the attention will be on Him!

As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God,* ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Then Peter tells them in v. 6 to humble themselves under the powerful hand of God – and as they do, He will lift them up.

Note that – humility is something we are to seek out ourselves.

Being humble is a choice we can make.

Either we humble ourselves – or we will BE humbled.

Those who exalt themselves will be brought low-but those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Then in v. 7, Peter shows us one of the main ways we can humble ourselves – by casting our cares on God.

When we're anxious and worried, what we're doing is thinking that our lives are in our own hands and that it's through our own efforts that we live.

That's nothing less than pride.

As we saw last Sunday, the humility the Lord wants from us is most perfectly illustrated in a little child.

We saw that the character of a child's humility is that it is *unable to deceive*.

But there's another important way a little child reveals humility – he/she trusts explicitly in his/her parents.

A little child doesn't worry because he/she has absolute confidence in mom & dad to take care of them.

With human parents, that trust may be misplaced- and yet it's real and intense.

Being the children of God means being humble to the point that we *trust Him explicitly!*

We can cast all our cares on Him – because He cares for us!

And if He would prove that care to the point of sending His Son to died for our sins, will He withhold anything else we need?
What an amazing thought – God cares for us!
At their best, the religions of Greek culture could imagine a God who was good.
Yet they never came to the place where they believed in a God who *cared*.
The God of the Bible - the God who is really there - is a God who cares for you. [\[2\]](#)

You know, we often judge the parents by the children.
When we see a child who's well-behaved, it reflects on the quality of parenting and tells us something about that parent.
Conversely, when we see some snot-nosed little brat behaving badly, we wonder about the parent; why haven't they been more diligent in their parenting?
When a child of God is full of worry and fear, doesn't the world have reason to believe that their Father in heaven doesn't care for them?
Our worry and fear reflects poorly - in an unfair way - upon God. [\[3\]](#)

⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Peter now issues a stern and bold warning.
Be sober! Be clear-headed.
In light of what he's just said to them. he means that they need to not allow their thinking to be clouded by the unreality of pride.
Pride is a kind spiritual inebriation that distorts reality.
And Peter says that we need to be clear-headed in light of the fact that we are at war.
We need to stay *vigilant*, which means on the lookout, because we have a real adversary who is constantly on the prowl, just like a

lion stalking prey.

The Book of Revelation tells us that the time will come when the devil will be bound for a 1000 years – but that time is yet to come. Right now we live in a time when he is free to prowl the earth and do mischief.

Therefore, we need to be sober and watchful, lest we fall to his attack.

Those of you who have served in the military know what an important responsibility guard duty is.

A sentry who is caught napping at his post is subject to the severest kind of punishment.

In fact, in wartime, if an officer finds a sentry asleep at their post, they can be executed on the spot!

The reason for this is because one sentry who is derelict in his duty at keeping watch may allow an access point to the enemy that could result in the deaths of an entire battalion and lead to ultimate defeat in the war.

As Christian, we yearn for peace – but as long as we are in these bodies, we find ourselves at war with a very real adversary who will make no compromises and offer no quarter.

He has one agenda in mind; your destruction and the thwarting of the plan and purposes of God.

He is ever on the prowl, looking for some way to slip in and do his evil work.

But what is his work – how does he accomplish his agenda?

Notice what Peter says here – he is like a lion – what kind of lion?

A roaring lion!

In Colossians 2:15 Paul tells us that at the cross, Jesus disarmed the devil and demons.

The word *disarmed* means to take away their weapons.

The only thing the powers of evil have left in their arsenal is their lying mouths!

The only power the devil has left is his *roar*, his mouth and speech. He lies to us, just as he did to Eve, and by so doing seeks to regain power by using the power WE GIVE TO HIM when we believe his lies.

Therefore, the best way to deal with the devil is to be a diligent

student of the Word of Truth, and then be attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit telling us when the devil is at work trying to deceive us.

So Peter says that we are to “Resist him, steadfast in the faith,” a faith that’s rooted and grounded in the Scriptures and a resistance that is clear-headed and watchful.

The word “resist” comes from the two Greek words for *stand & against*.

Peter tells them to *stand against* the devil.

This is wonderful - Satan can be rebuffed and set to flight by the resistance of even the lowliest of believers who come in the authority of what Jesus did for them on the cross.

Then Peter says, **“Knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”**

One of the enemy’s chief lies is the idea that no one knows what we’re going through.

The age-old tactic of *divide and conquer* is an effective strategy and the devil uses it on us all the time.

He tempts you, or fills your life with anxiety and trouble and then makes you feel as though no one cares or no one can relate to what you’re enduring.

Some inordinate desire will sweep over you, some totally wretched thought that haunts and nags at you and you think that no one else faces such things.

You wonder if maybe it wouldn’t be best for you to just give up this Christian thing, because surely, Christians don’t every have those kinds of desires or thoughts.

That’s all just part of the campaign of deceit the devil uses to cut you out of the herd so he can devour you.

This is precisely what a lion does.

It will sneak up through the tall grass on the unwatchful herd.

When it gets close to the fringe of the herd, it selects one prey and then springs forward in such a way as to try and cut the individual out of the herd.

Sometimes, a lion will just sit at a distance and roar loudly.

The herd is spooked by this and will frantically stampede, sometimes leaving one lone individual all by itself – easy pickings for the lion.

You are not alone – your struggle is common to the Body of Christ.
Don't let the enemy cut you out and divide you from your
spiritual family.

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His
eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a
while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

11 To Him *be the glory and the dominion forever and
ever. Amen.*

Peter ends with a prayer – that the God of all grace would pour out
that grace in such abundance that it would bring them through
their season of suffering into a settled and secure place of genuine
spiritual maturity.

There is something here we must not miss.

Peter says - “May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal
glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while . . .”

We are only called to *eternal* glory after we have suffered *a while*.

We *wish* we were called to glory on the “no suffering” plan. ^[4]

But the fact is, the path to glory lies through a world which is in
direct rebellion against God and to live for God means to walk
against the wind.

It's the legacy of the people of God that they have been hated,
mocked, scorned, rejected, despised, abused, belittled,
mistreated, misunderstood, tortured and put to death.

Though they have lived honorable lives and sought only to love
and serve the lost, they have been dishonored, hunted, hounded
and rejected.

We ought not think it strange that we would be treated the same
way.

If they treated Jesus that way, why should we who follow Him
expect anything different?

Yet, our suffering is only a little while – the glory that God bestows is
eternal.

12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I
have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that
this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

It was the custom of that time to *dictate* a letter to someone who was skilled as a scribe, and Peter had done that with Silvanus.

Silvanus is a form of the name *Silas* who was the traveling companion of Paul for his second and third missionary journeys.

Peter adds this little comment about the grace of God as a way to signify that he knows what he's dictated isn't merely a nice idea, it's the counsel and direction of the Holy Spirit.

13 She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.

The "She" refers to the Church.

As the bride of Christ, this was a common idiom in that day for the Church.

By Babylon, we can't be quite certain exactly what Peter meant.

The ancient city of Babylon in modern day Iraq is one possibility, but we have no record that Peter ever went there.

Another possibility is either Rome or Jerusalem, both of which are called in the scriptures by the figurative title of *Babylon* because of their gross sin and spiritual rebellion, things that ancient Babylon was the birthplace of.

However Peter means this, one church is greeting another.

Mark is the same one who wrote the Gospel of Mark and who we read about in the Book of Acts – he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey and then when Paul and Barnabas split up, went with Barnabas while Paul took Silas.

Reliable church tradition says that Mark became the companion of Peter and that it was from Peter that Mark got the content of his gospel.

14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

As in some European and Middle Eastern countries *today*, it was customary in Bible times that if you wanted to greet someone affectionately, you did it with a kiss.

Peter says that *affection* ought to mark the way we treat one another – and that our greetings ought to demonstrate

something more than just a casual acquaintance.

We're family, and ought to greet one another as such.

Kissing is not really a cultural norm for us, but a hearty hug is – so this is probably the best way to translate this idiom into our time and experience.

[1] Guzik, David, on-line commentary on 1 Peter 5:5

[2] ibid, 1 Peter 5:7

[3] ibid

[4] ibid, 1 Peter 5:10